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LETTER DATED 22 JUNE 1992 FROM THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Words fail to describe the human suffering in Bosnia-Herzegovina today. Reports substantiated by the international news media tell of unbelievable massacres and the brutal slaughter of tens of thousands of innocent civilians confirmed name by name, day after day.

One tenth of those killed have been children. Taking women and children as hostages has become a routine operation. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, concentration camps are not part of the past, but reality today.

Thousands of civilians are hiding in forests around Zvornik, Foca, Visegrad, Prijedor, Bihac, Gorazde and many other towns and villages. They are anxiously waiting for help. There are confirmed reports of Serbian MiG attacks on Gorazde, where 20,000 refugees are located. Chemical weapons were dropped by air in Foca and Gorazde between 6.20 and 7.00 p.m. yesterday.

Most of the population centres are under heavy artillery fire. The capital, Sarajevo, was bombarded by 5,000 shells in 24 hours last Friday, 19 June. Hunger is claiming its victims, water supplies have been savagely cut off in many areas.

The inhuman brutality, concentration camps, torture, deportation and other unbelievable crimes have led international observers to compare the atrocities with the killing of civilians in Nazi-occupied Europe.

As a tragic result of the aggression, 50,000 persons are now dead and the number is rising. The rapidly escalating death toll is the result of new and alarming reports reaching the Government from outlying towns and villages, mainly along the border with Serbia.

One hundred thousand people have been wounded, thousands are missing, and 1.4 million people are now homeless. Towns have been turned into rubble. The economic infrastructure has been systematically destroyed.

Cultural genocide without precedent has occurred, with 306 sacred buildings - mosques, churches, synagogues, museums - attacked, burned and destroyed.

Cease-fire after cease-fire, including the most recent, have been used to deceive the international community while solidifying the occupation forces. This subterfuge has allowed the aggressor to pursue his strategy of "ethnically purifying" areas of the country.

The cease-fires have been used to tighten the siege upon starving people, while allowing the aggressor to advance his forces and capture more territory. Delay is his most deadly weapon and the cruelest instrument of death for our people.

The people of Bosnia-Herzegovina - Muslims, Croats, Serbs and others - continue to be annihilated. Bosnia-Herzegovina haemorrhages before the very eyes of the civilized world.

Mr. President, for 11 weeks now, the sovereign nation of Bosnia-Herzegovina has suffered the brutal aggression of Serbian and Montenegran regular and paramilitary forces and extremists within the Serbian population of Bosnia-Herzegovina, who are armed, organized and supported by the former Yugoslav army and Serbia.

Overly cautious and ambiguous diplomatic language of international leaders and official reports have equated the two sides in this conflict. They are not the same. One is the aggressor, the other is the victim. Such obfuscation encourages aggression, not conciliation. It undermines the cause of justice and fails to differentiate between the two sides, let alone protect the victim.

My Government has made repeated urgent pleas for the international community to come to our defence in an effort to stop the horrible killing of innocent civilians.

The catastrophic situation on the ground, universal world opinion in opposition to Serbia, and the august principles of the United Nations Charter make it imperative that the Security Council adopt measures to protect the integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia-Herzegovina and to stop the brutal aggression by Serbia and Montenegro. All other options have failed. Military intervention is the only recourse.

We urgently appeal to the Security Council to invoke Article 42 of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter immediately. The independent and sovereign State of Bosnia-Herzegovina is entitled to protection. Any further delay will result in the deaths of thousands of innocent people.

I would be grateful if you would have this letter circulated immediately as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dr. Haris SILAJDZIC
Foreign Minister